

A
Dissertation
on
The Effects of Aliment
on
The Human Constitution
submitted as
An Inaugural Thesis
for
The degree of Doctor of Medicine

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A

Dissertation on the Effects of Aliment on
the Human Constitution

The human system, in common with other animal bodies is a curiously organised structure, consisting of compages of tubular vessels with their contained circulating fluids; tho perhaps of a more exquisite and perfect workmanship, if it be possible for human reason to designate by any characteristic marks; degrees of perfection, in the works of Divine wisdom.

This body of man, being wonderfully

formed and the most perfectly organised machine, as it came from the hands of the Divine Architect, was first put in motion, by the impulse of his breath—For we read in the sacred volume— That God breathed into man the breath of life (that is, air) and he became a living soul; The air serving to set the beautiful image in motion.— And the influence of this impulse to action, on the originally formed body, was so powerful, as not only to continue it in exertion, for a length of time; which constitutes what is called life

but also endowed it with a power of communicating a like impulse to other organised bodies, which this animalised body had the power of forming, by the wonderful process of generation—hence the innumerable living beings, that have existed and continue to exist for a time, in their turns, by successive generations, since the creation of the parent stock, tho they must all decay, and run their course, tending ultimately to dissolution.—

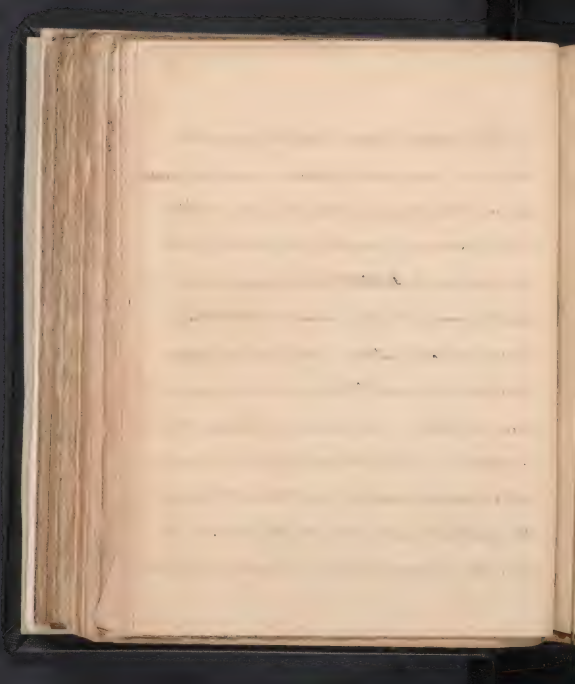
As it seems to be a first law of nature that all created matter, should be subject

and after reading it with a friend of mine
immediately a letter inquired its author
supposedly being, without the accompaniment
being had the favour of its being left to
me and I should be glad to have it
transmitted being being, that I have written
and nothing to be said for a time in this
line of my experience, from which I have
the reason of the present work in the
they must all be ready and have the same
being actually to be translated
it is to be a gift to the
that all the matter, which is subject

to continual change and transmutation,
and that all organised bodies should in
process of time become decomposed, into their
first elementary particles, preparatory to
their entering into, & forming the constituent
parts of others; In this perhaps consists
the life of the Universe, if we may be
allowed the expression. ~ ~ ~

Man being created thus perfect, ~~was~~ placed
in a medium, affording the proper quantity
of stimuli, to keep the machine in motion,
during times, were it not subject to decay
from its own action, by slow degrees. ~ ~ ~

7
This gradual waste, to which animal
bodies are continually liable, man is capable
of counteracting, by other foreign matters
which serve to supply the loss to which
his system is ~~subject~~. For man, when
created was not only endowed with the
power of locomotion, but in an elevated
part of his frame there is found an organ
more peculiarly and delicately formed, that
is capable of ten thousand reflex and compli-
cated motions, which constitute the mind
the noblest part of that being said to
bear the image of the Creator.



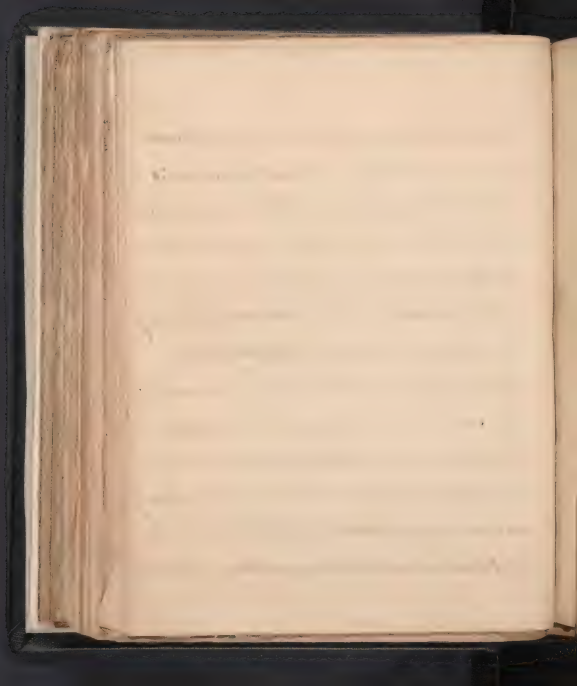
of his reasoning powers and other faculties
- These are the characteristics ~~and~~ distinctive
marks, which rank him so much
above other animals.

Man thus animated and endowed, finds
himself impelled by intellectual springs,
to exert those powers and faculties, given
him for the purpose of enjoying life - but
soon perceives his powers enfeebled the
energy of his understanding diminished and
indeed his whole system debilitated by
reason of the exhaustion, of the body, as it
is continually wasting by degrees and the
powers and



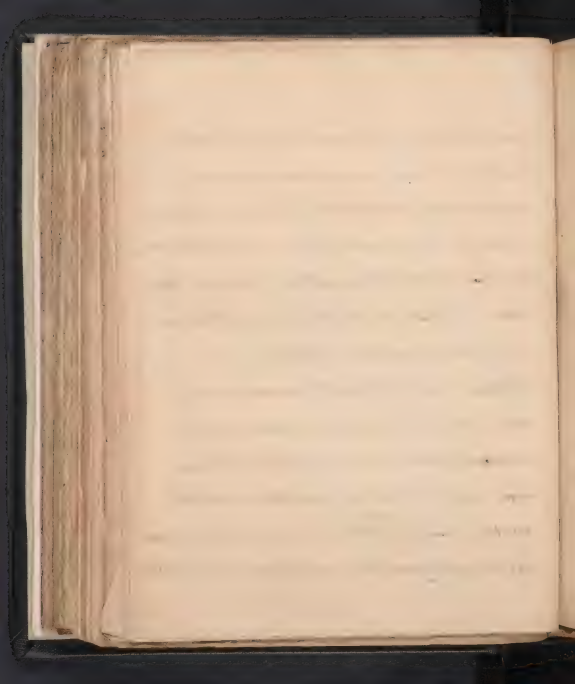
faculties of the mind are in an equal proportion impaired, being intimately connected with the organization of the body depending on the intercommunications in the substance of the brain.

On reflection and by attentively observing the phenomena that are constantly taking place in his body, man readily discovers the source from whence this exhaustion and consequent weakness of the powers of his system originate. He observes, on hourly and unceasing wastes of his fluids in the different excrementitious matters continually



passing off by the several excretories of
his body - these evacuations tend to
exhaust and debilitate the human frame,
and teach the necessity there is of replenishing
the loss, with other matter to supply the
place of what is spent by being thrown
out by these various outlets.

~~But~~ In such a state, if ignorant of any
mode of refurnishing his system, with
nutriment matter to sustain its equilibrium
man would be but a miserable short-lived
creature, rapidly ^{reying} to his primitive nothingness,
had it not been for a wise provision of the



Divine Creator, in forming his body, in so wonderful a manner, with various organized parts, admirably fitted for receiving and converting foreign substances into a fluid fluid fitted to be united with the circulating mass, and when mixed to be distributed throughout the whole system thro' the medium of this circulating mass and deposited in the different parts, and finally to become constituent parts of his body, ~~is subject~~ to supply the waste it is subject to from the exertion necessary to its existence in an animated state. And scarcely would human reason



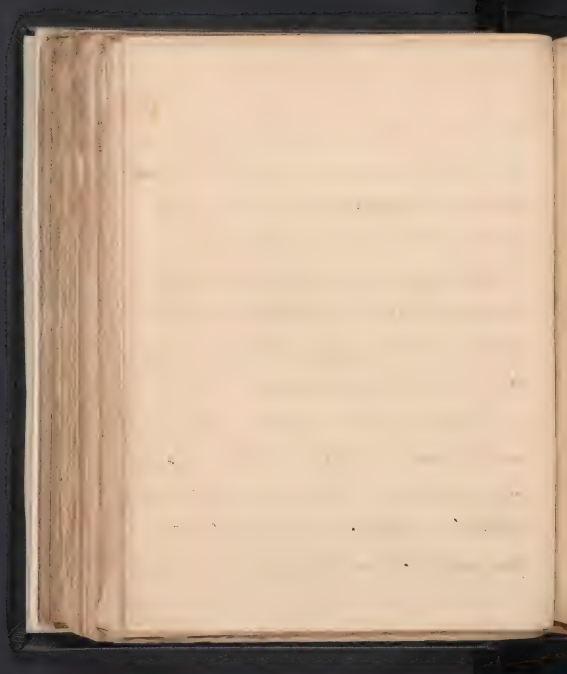
be adequate to the regular performance of
such requisite duties, if it were not that
man as well as other animals, are incited
to take in nutritious substances by a painful
irritation experienced in an important organ,
the stomach, excited in it by a peculiar
fluid secreted by certain glands and which
is poured into the stomach in such a state as
to irritate it when empty. it is called the
gastric juice and produces the sensation of
Hunger, to relieve which we are impelled to
take food.

The food suitable for man commonly consists



of nutrient substances, which after undergoing the various processes of Mastication, chemifaction and chylofication being mixed and diluted with several secreted fluids it finally becomes assimilated with the circulating mass of the system, in the lacteals and other vessels that serve to carry the chyle to the blood vessels. —

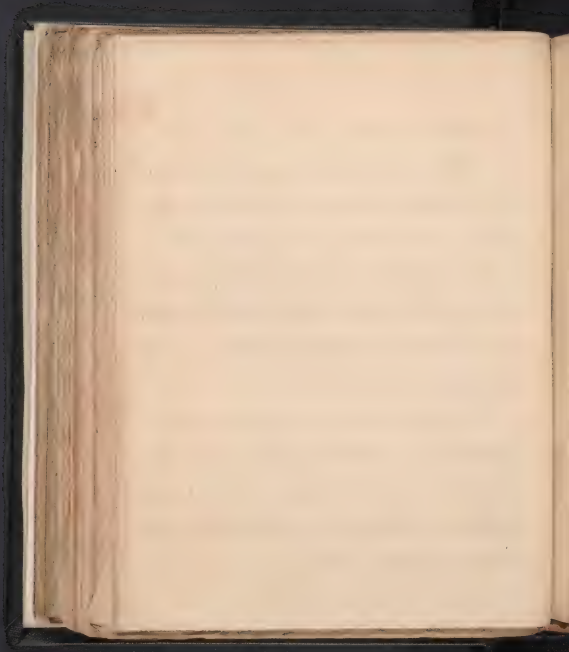
in this way nourishment is afforded to animal bodies, for the alimentary particles being deposited in the course of their circulation, in cells &c and forming accretions that supply the loss, the body sustains by



the various secretions and excretions.

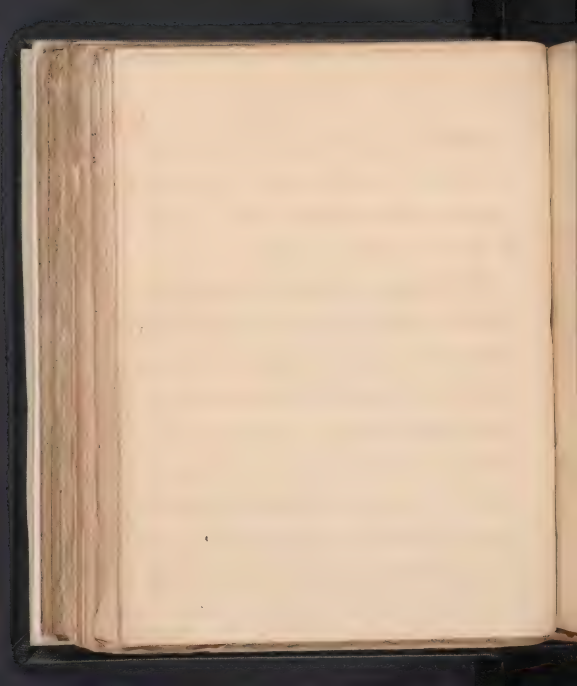
After these preliminary observations I proceed to make a few remarks respecting
a particular effect of Aliment on the
human constitution and the manner of
affording the body its proper nourishment
so as to preserve health and obtain a contin-
uance of life.

The subject of diet is one of the most
important, as on its being properly regulated
depends in a great measure our enjoyment
of health and life, yet in general too little
attention is paid to it.

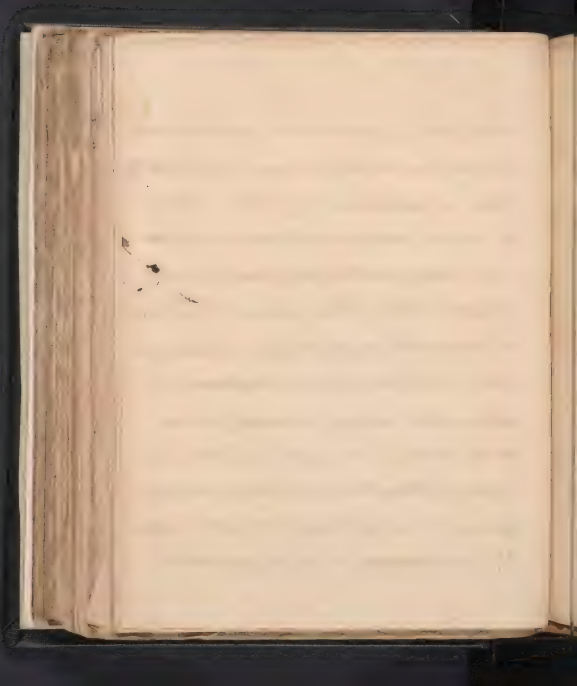


I believe the seeds of more of our diseases, are taken in with our food than in any other way, and that our Health is often affected by this means, than ⁱⁿ any other whatever.

The ill effects of aliment on the human constitution, I do not think is owing so much to the quality of the food, ^{as} the quantity. The stomach and even the whole system which sympathizes with it, is capable of accommodating itself to almost any kind of aliment, provided the change be effected gradually. Men can so easily accommodate themselves to ^{so} many different modes of living

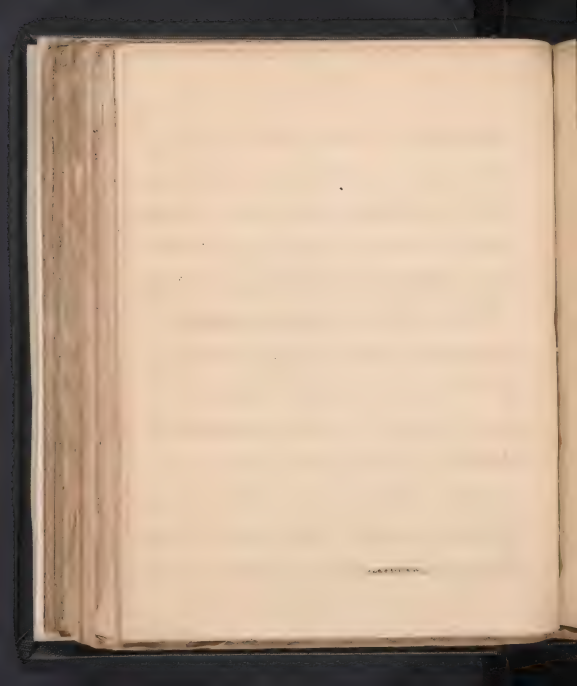


and to feeding on such various and discordant
articles of diet that he may be emphatically
styled an omnivorous animal. It is
the excessive indulgence in the use of these
articles, which are eaten that proves both det-
rimental to his health & injurious to his con-
stitution, and brings upon him, pain, disease and
death. The ill effects of intemperance, in
eating, are not suddenly, so sensibly felt - nor
do they destroy so soon, yet more fall victims
to their gluttony, than by pestilence, sword or
famine. Man is so infatuated to make
the worst use of what was designed as the



greatest blessing. Not even the noxious miasmatic vapours nor the pinching cold, that most bitter and implacable enemy to life, with which we have to contend, in preserving health, are half so destructive as intemperance in eating.

The foundation of most of our ~~diseases~~ complaints are laid in infancy & childhood, by the improper use of food & by far the greatest injury is done to the constitutions of children by it, when given in too great a quantity. It is very easy to conceive what immense mischief, may be done to the tender stomachs of ~~Children~~ the young, when we consider

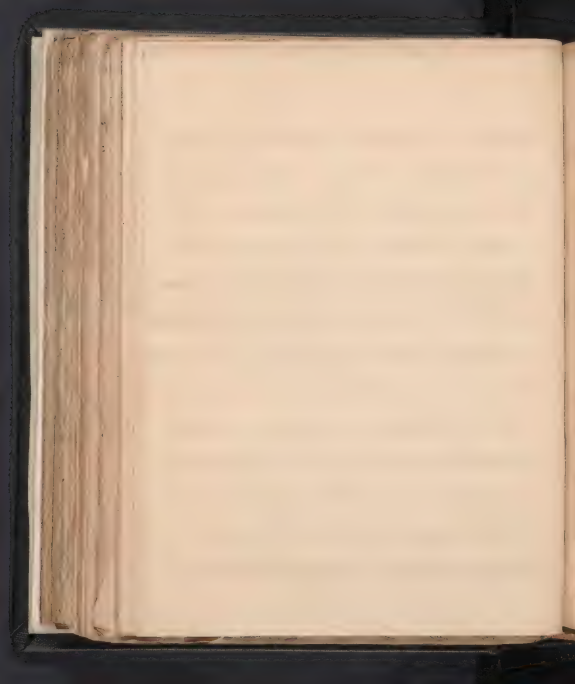


How delicate & irritable the viscous is, & how
quickly it is affected, tho' capable of great
extension, by stuffing it with a greater quantity
of aliment than can be properly digested.
and these injurious effects are not confined to
the stomach only, but are propagated to the
rest of the system, which sympathizes with
it. The stomach is disordered by the
superabundant aliment, the lax and yielding
vessels are distended with crude juices
unsuited to the formation of proper fluids
to be mixed with the blood, hence the system
is oppressed with a load of gross matter

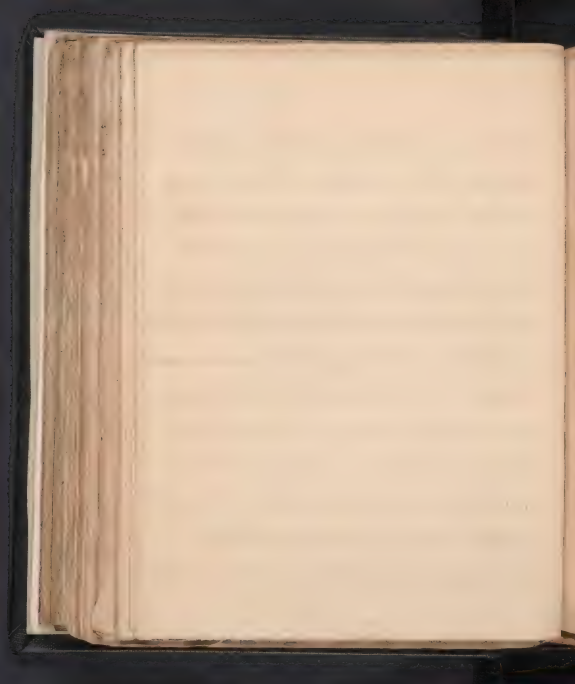


which it is compelled to get rid of by some violent effort: which frequently brings on convulsive action, & this is disease.

Man like other animals is induced to take his food from the impulse of hunger. and tho' he is endow'd with reasoning faculties by which, we would suppose he might regulate the manner of receiving his aliment; yet with all his boasted superiority of intellect he commits more errors in this respect than any other animal. I know of no way, in which he appears to abuse his reason so much as he does in regard to the taking



the necessary quantity of nourishment to
preserve life with health. How frequently
does the Epicurean sacrifice his health,
with all its attendant enjoyments, to
the gratification of his appetite; ^{for} not well-
pleased with simple food, tho' the rarest-
products of both the vegetable and animal
kingdoms: he is continually inventing new
and complicated dishes of the choicest &
and most delicious articles — still not-
content to partake of the richest and most
gustful viands, in moderate quantity —
what Nature craves, he devours, under the



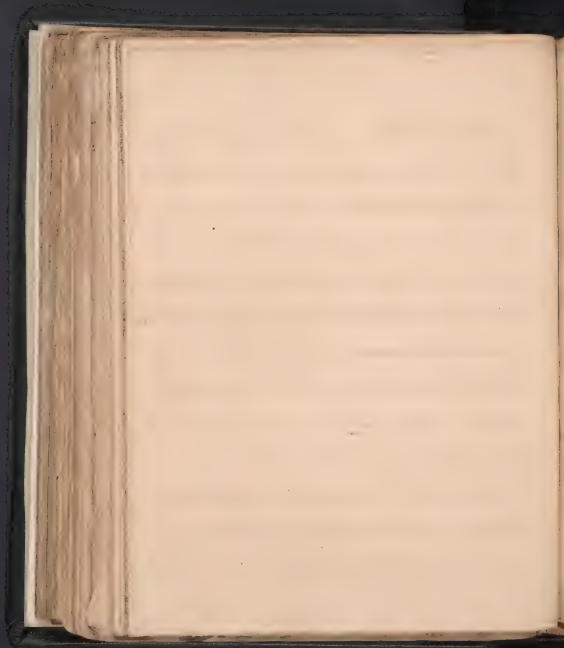
guise of savoury meals the bane of his health
while he is decaying every artificial means
of increasing & whetting his appetite that he
may have the pleasure of feasting it. The sense
of taste is one of the greatest sources of pleas-
ure, with which we are favoured, when only
gratified, as reason & experience dictate, that
is when we eat simply, to satisfy hunger
and afford nourishment to the body. But
not satisfied with the pleasure, Nature has
made us capable of enjoying, we are incessantly
creating artificial methods of heightening this
pleasure first by creating an artificial



appetite and then ravacking the world, for
the means of gratifying those undue desires.

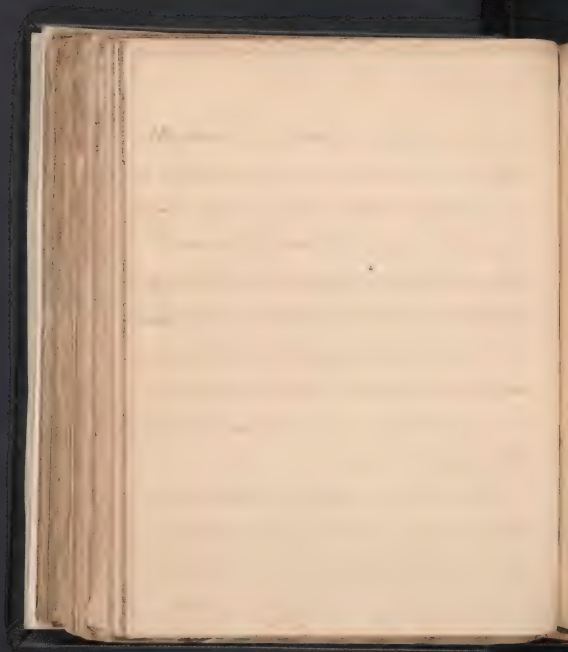
The effect, tho' slow is not a less certain
poison, undermining the constitution of the
gluttonous eater, who tho' sure of being pun-
ished for his folly, by train of happy and diseased
constantly attending on intemperate eating
still he is drawn away, to his destruction
by the alluring feast; or it may be said
he eats himself into the grave.

Our food to be conducive to health and
continuance of life, should be taken in
quite moderate quantities, just sufficient to

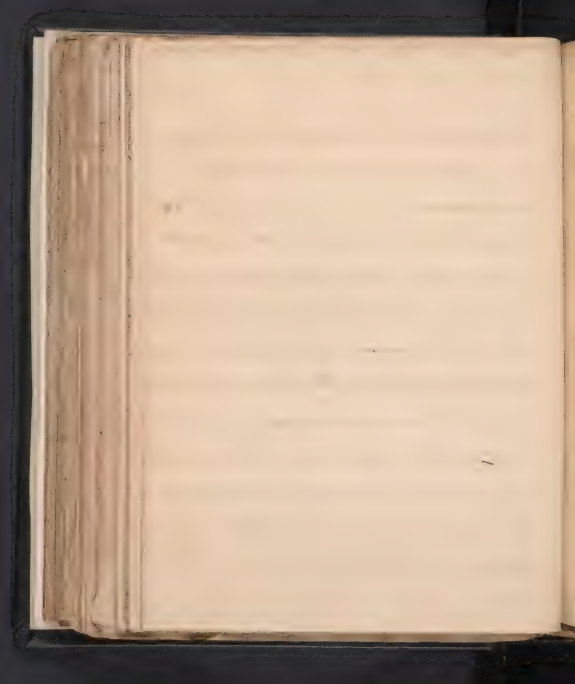


nourish the body, and the more simple, the better; now that case we are not so apt to err, with respect to the proper quantity, necessary for our support. If we take too much food, we soon feel oppression and fullness of the stomach, a dull heaviness and slight pain of the head succeeds, indigestion, flatulency, and acid eructations - sometimes nausea and vomiting till the stomach relieves itself, of this oppressive load.

There have been many speculations and disputes among writers on the subject of diet, respecting what ought to constitute



The proper food of the Human species, whether
man is to be considered as a carnivorous or
carnivorous animal. Some asserting that
He ought to be circumscribed to the vegetable
Kingdom, for the articles of his diet, which often
as warmly contend and dispute with equal
propriety that animal food is necessary for
his nourishment; and that the whole animal
race is to be considered as under the control
of his appetite. These speculations are of
little moment and only to be regarded as
they sometimes do harm by influencing
persons to make too sudden changes in their



mode of life as the refraining ^{from} animal and
living entirely on vegetable food or vice versa -
which has sometimes produced unpleasant con-
sequences to their health - sometimes proved
fatal. The excess in quantity and sudden
change from living on one kind of aliment
and substituting in its stead another, may
be considered as the principal circumstances
to be regarded in the regulating of our diet
to prevent ill health. We may except
some few with peculiar idiosyncrasies, who are
very singularly affected by certain kinds of
food. Some persons cannot take milk, that



now mild and nutrient fluid, with^{out} occasion-
ing great pain and distress. Mrs. H.
informed me she never suffered more
excruciating pains than she did after having
taken a small quantity of milk. Others
have a violent colic excited by one of the
most delicious articles of food. Hence, ge-
neral artists are in such high esteem as
to be characteristic of a favoured land.
^{as caused by Heaven} Some few cannot eat the flesh of particular
kinds of animals, while others reject
But there are only a few of human race
who may not partake of every species of

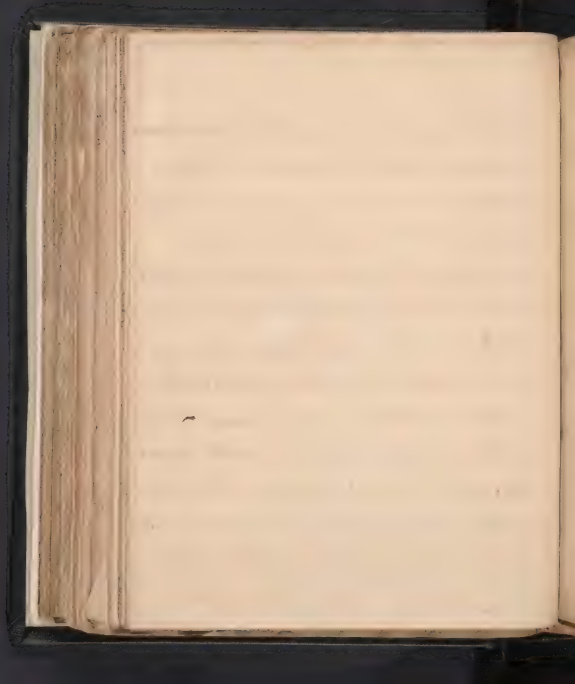


dict, in small quantity and their stomachs
will digest it and shortly become so habit-
uated to receive it that they swallow it
with pleasure and satisfaction. I have myself
found it convenient, on removing from one part
of the United States to another, where the
manner of living was different, to learn to
eat that, which at first was quite disgusting
and unpalatable but in time, when new
taste and stomach becoming familiarized to
its use, grew extremely fond of; and what
formerly, the very thoughts of eating of food
would ^{have} almost excited a nausea, by habitis



undiscovered extremely pleasant. We know from
experience that the human constitution
is formed to be capable of accommodating
itself to almost any mode of living
according to the situation and circumstances
in which we may be placed by
nature or where we may chance to be cast
by misfortune, so as to enjoy health.

We find people in different parts of the
earth who subsist life and health most
pleasantly and appear equally attached
to their country, tho' they live in climates
of very different kinds and of the most

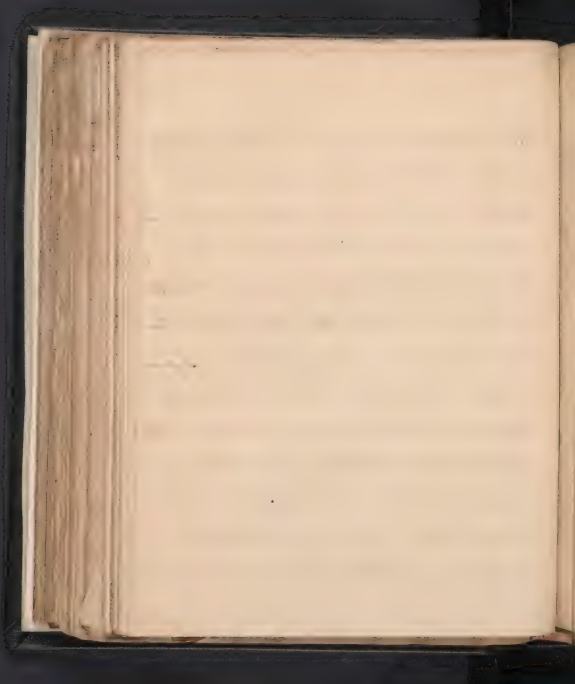


dissimilar properties, taken from the vegetable
or animal kingdom. The Northern tribes
of Europe and America, are said to live
mostly on the rancid oil they extract
from fish, which communicates even to
their breath such an offensive, odor as to
sicken their more Southern neighbours, who
are more delicately; while there are nations
in Africa who feed almost exclusively on
the mucilage they obtain from the plant
Ucacia, called Gum arabic. The Hindoos
and Chinese enjoy their rice, while the
English and French are more fond of roast.



beef and rich soups. The Native inhab-
itants of the South Sea Islands live
chiefly on ripe fruits, which abound more
or less in an acid; And the blacks in
the West India Islands, are said to fatten
on the juice of the cane, during the time
they are employed in manufacturing sugar.

Some Nations seem to be possessed of
stomachs adapted to their situation on the
globe, formed for concocting substances
especially the most indigestible and
unalimentary and extracting there, some
nourishment for their bodies. The



The L^{ap}landers make their bread of powdered
fish bones and the bark of some trees, and
leasts on it perhaps with as good a relish as
we do on the finest wheaten loaf. These are
instances of many travellers visiting and
remaining in these countries where the
modes of life are so very diverse, yet
they have been able in a short time to
accommodate themselves to the customs of
their hosts. These circumstances prove the
versatility of our constitutions, and that
it is not so much the quality of the food
we take that is to be regarded as producing



ingrassious effects as the quantity or the too
quick transition from one mode of living or
species of diet, to that of another, without
allowing the stomach time gradually to
become acquainted with the newly introduced
aliment: we find the functions of the an-
imal economy equally well and as regularly
carried on, in those who live on those
various kinds of food provided they are
temperate. But if they indulge to excess
the stomach is thereby too much distended
and its functions disordered - its powers of
digestion weakened - and indigestion, cardialgia



dyspepsia etc. are as certainly the consequence
of surfeit in the Laplander with his ^{little} bread
as to the more luxurious Frenchman
who feasts on his rich soups or the English
man who gormendises his high seasoned
dishes of meat.

Many of our most obstinate and afflictive
diseases might be avoided or prevented by
a due attention to & properly regulating
our diet in the early periods of life.
Few children would surfeit themselves
with plain and simple food if given to
them at proper intervals. Their overeating



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is most commonly owing to their appetites
being stimulated by rich and high seasoned
dishes, As they have not judgement prop-
erly to regulate the quantity they indulge
to excess, and when ~~the~~ once they have
fallen into the habit, it is very diffi-
cult to restrain them, within the
bounds of moderation. Another mistake
many parents fall into, with respect to
the food of children, that is they feed
them too much on 'vapour food' not
sufficiently nourishing, fancying ^{it} the most
healthy, of which it is requisite for them



to eat large quantities to receive the necessary nourishment, as they require more, than in proportion than persons in middle life, they so distend the stomach that when they come to live on a more nutritious diet they are constantly liable to eat to excess. Children and youth ought to be fed on simple food and as often as the stomach craves it, thus we avoid all temptation to indulge to excess. Many parents and others who have the charge of youth refuse to indulge them with food in the intervals of their meals.

and very commonly make them wait
till the older part of the family have
breakfasted or dined, by which time
they become so hungry as to eat by far
too much for the powers of the stomach
to digest and frequently swallow it with
such greediness, as not to masticate
it sufficiently, that it is with diffi-
culty digested. Thus an embryo disease is
formed ~~and~~ lurking in the system for
an opportunity to show ^{itself} ~~itself~~ in future
life - and its effects are only to be avoided
by living abstemiously, like the wise Genoa.

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